EXAMINING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND CAMPUS CLIMATE AMONG UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MUSLIM STUDENTS

Participation in voluntary associations and religious activities is associated with greater civic outcomes. At the University of California (UC), most students are engaged in civic activities such as student organizations. Among University of California religious students, Muslim students are highly engaged in both student organizations and community service (on and off campus). This paper explores differences in Muslim engagement compared to religious and nonreligious peers as well as the role that campus climate and demographic factors may play in shaping participation patterns. Based on statistical analysis of 2016 UCUES survey data, results suggest that 1) Muslims participate in more religious groups 2) Feeling a sense of belonging on campus is related to increased engagement among Muslims and 3) Positive campus climates decrease likelihood of Muslim participation. Results imply that students’ comfortable with dominant campus climates may be less inclined to participate in extracurricular civic activities.

How Are Muslim Students Engaged on Campus?

Muslim students participate in student organizations at higher percentages than their religious and nonreligious peers. They also engage in community service on and off campus at higher levels than religious and nonreligious students.

What Demographic Factors Shape Muslim Engagement?

Muslim International Students Are More Likely to Be Engaged on Campus

Muslim students participate in community service on and off campus compared to 44% of religious students and only 26% of non-religious students."**

Muslim Students Are More Likely to Engage in Community Service on and off Campus

About 30% of Muslims participate in community service on and off campus compared to 26% of religious students and only 22% of non-religious students."**

Feeling a Sense of Belonging Increases Muslim Engagement

Feeling a sense of belonging increased the odds of Muslim student engagement by 44% when accounting for gender, income, race, immigrant, international status, and other campus climate outcomes."**

Positive Campus Climates Decrease the Likelihood That Muslims Will Be Engaged

Higher ratings on administrators’ commitment to promoting a climate of respect is associated with a 35% decreased likelihood of joining a student organization for Muslim students."**

Muslims Rate Campus Climates for Diversity About the Same as Other Religious Groups

Muslim students report slightly lower scores on religious and nonreligious peers on “Overall, feel comfortable with the climate for diversity on this campus” (44% of Muslims agree compared to 43% of other religious groups and 81% of non-religious students).***

Black Muslims Feel the Least Comfortable with Campus Diversity Climates

Only 96% of Black Muslims agree that they feel comfortable with the climate for diversity on campus, compared to 93% of White and Middle Eastern Nordic Africans (MENA); 88% of South Asians and 86% of Southeast Asian students.***

Belonging Is Slightly Lower for Muslims and Non Religious Students Compared to Other Religious Groups

Belonging to Campus

Muslims and nonreligious students both rated their sense of belonging on campus lower (91%) than other religious students (93%)***. Among Muslims, 45% of Black Muslims rated feeling they belong to campus compared to 79% of non-black Muslim peers.

Religious and Non Religious Students Feel Slightly More Welcomed on Campus than Muslims

88% of religious students and 87% of non-religious students feel welcome on campus, compared to 84% of Muslims.***

Black Muslims Feel the Least Welcomed on Campus

Black Muslims feel less welcomed on campus (44%) compared to other races and religions, such as 86% of MENA and South Asians and 88% of Southeast Asian Muslims.***

Most Feel That Campus is Safe Among Muslims

Most Muslims feel that campus is safe (79%) compared to 68% of non-Muslim students. This feeling is strongly agreed upon by Muslims, with a higher percentage of Muslims rate campus as unsafe (21%) compared to religious (33%) and non-religious students.***

Muslims Rate Campus Administrators’ and Faculty Commitment to Promote Respect Lower Than Religious and Non Religious Peers

79% of Muslim students agree that faculty weregenerously committed to creating a climate of respect on campus, compared to 87% of religious and 85% of non-religious students.*** Administrators’ commitments to promote respect were rated lower (49%) among Muslims compared to 66% of religious and 56% of non-religious students.

MENA/White and Southeast Asian students rate faculty commitment to promote respect higher (90%) than Black and South Asian Muslims (45% and 80%).*** Similarly, Black Muslims and South Asians also rated administrative commitment to promoting respect on campus lower (96% and 64%) compared to White and Southeast Asian students (95% and 97%).***

Higher Income Among Muslims Increases Odds of Engagement

Higher income among Muslims increases odds of engagement by 41%.

Overall, Muslim students rate climate, safety and belonging positively, but lower than other religious groups on campus.

Within the community, Black Muslim students’ ratings are significantly lower than other races and religions, compared to their other-raced Muslim peers.***

Comparison with Non-Race Specific Groups

Comparing Muslims to other race-specific groups, we find positive campuses with higher diversity ratings.***

Muslims agree they feel valued as individuals of non-religious and other religious students.***

Muslims agree they feel valued as individuals of non-religious and other religious students.***